



Maryland Office of People's Counsel (OPC)

OPC represents the interests of residential utility customers in matters before the Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC). The PSC regulates gas, electric, local landline and private water utilities, and oversees energy suppliers. OPC also works with agencies and non-profit organizations throughout the State on utility issues affecting low-income households.

Critical Medical Needs Program

The Critical Medical Needs Program began as a 3 year partnership initiated by OPC and the Cancer Support Foundation with BGE, DHS/OHEP, DHCD and other agencies and non-profit organizations. Due to the success of the program, the General Assembly passed HB1189/SB425 in 2019, and the bills were signed by Governor Hogan (CH. 282/283). **The Program is now an official responsibility of the Office of Home Energy Programs (OHEP).** However, OPC will continue to work with OHEP and other partners as the CMNP expands statewide.

The CMNP provides rapid assistance with past-due energy bills and pending utility service shut-offs to medically vulnerable households who meet income eligibility guidelines. The Program relies on trained Navigators, housed within medical facilities and community assistance agencies. The Navigators identify clients or patients who meet the medical criteria and face utility service shut-offs due to past-due bills, and assist with processing of the energy assistance applications. The processing protocols for the Navigators, BGE and assistance agencies already are in place.

The Program partners currently are working on plans to expand Navigator sites and training throughout the State, and utility participation. OHEP also will develop implementation regulations.

This Program can be beneficial for clients who are seriously ill or rely on electricity for life-support equipment, and face loss of essential utility service. If you would like to be notified of further updates on this Program, please send an email to OPC at DLInfo_OPC@maryland.gov.

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